

Parks & Recreation

Planning Commission Working Group

October 5, 2020



Items for Review Today

- Technical Report
- Community Guidance
- GSAs - from 2035 Comprehensive Plan



Introduction to Parks & Recreation

- 1981: Creation of James City County Parks & Recreation Office.
- 1982: First parks and recreation system master plan adopted.
- 1993: Revised master plan with ambitious proposal for property acquisition and development, and an emphasis on the importance of water access and the need to develop trails, bikeways and greenways.
- 2009: Revised master plan recommended a shift in focus, emphasizing the importance of partnerships, contractual agreements and leases, and redefining Parks & Recreation's role from direct service provider to program facilitator.
- 2017: Revised master plan found that trails and water access continued to be County residents' most frequently requested recreational amenities. The plan also noted a lack of recreational facilities in the lower portion of the County.



Parks & Recreation - Inventory

- The County now operates 17 parks spanning 1,711 acres.
- These parks contain two recreation centers, 41 miles of trails, a sports complex featuring a synthetic turf stadium, and numerous opportunities for water access for fishing, boating and swimming.



Parks & Recreation - Inventory

- Both the County and WJCC Schools have numerous courts, fields and playgrounds, and maintain a joint facility use agreement to promote effective sharing of both outdoor and indoor space.
- Many private recreation facilities (tennis courts, golf courses, trails and swimming pools) exist within neighborhoods.
- Facilities in adjacent localities are available to County residents.
- State and Federal facilities are located in the County, such as York River State Park.



Parks & Recreation - Programming

- The Parks & Recreation Department currently offers more than 2,000 programs annually, with active and passive recreation opportunities for all ages, interests and abilities.
- To assist residents in accessing recreation opportunities and improving health and wellness, Parks & Recreation offers a discount assistance program to residents of both James City County and the City of Williamsburg.
- As the County's population changes, the types of programs that are in demand and barriers to serving the youth, senior and lower-income populations change as well.
 - Example: Teens On Point (TOP) program.

Parks & Recreation – Greenways, Blueways and Shoreline Recreation

- Greenways –
 - Typically networks of natural open space corridors that connect neighborhoods to parks, schools and other significant sites.
 - 2002 Greenway Master Plan establishes a framework for a County-wide system of interconnected greenways and trails, and could be incorporated into a green infrastructure plan in the future.



Parks & Recreation – Greenways, Blueways and Shoreline Recreation

- Blueways and Shoreline Recreation –
 - Many County acquisitions to enhance water access: Chickahominy Riverfront Park, Jamestown Beach Event Park and James City County Marina, and most recently, Brickyard Landing property.
 - Ongoing enhancements to these parks/facilities, including shoreline stabilization.



Parks & Recreation – Recreation Needs

- 2017 system master plan contains:
 - Community inventory, including school, government and select nonprofit and private facilities;
 - A level of service analysis for three scenarios;
 - 14 equity maps and a discussion of most-needed amenities.
- Park acreage per 1,000 residents exceeded recommended service standard, while trail miles, bike lanes, and some other amenities fell short of the recommended service standard.
- Equity maps show that many of the County's recreation facilities are clustered in the central portion County; the most underserved areas for several types of facilities are in the north (Stonehouse District) and south (Roberts District).

Parks & Recreation – Action Plan

- The adopted Parks & Recreation Master Plan sets out the specific actions the County will take to meet its projected recreation needs and is expressed in terms of specific goals, strategies and tactics, as well as a list of future capital improvements.
- To offset the cost of the construction and operation of new facilities, have continued to explore revenue-generating programs and facilities, and seek funding through alternative sources.
- Guidelines in the Plan address provision of neighborhood recreational facilities when considering special use permit (SUP) and rezoning applications.



Parks & Recreation – Spotlight on Implementation

- In 2017, Parks & Recreation achieved national accreditation from NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies.
- Recognized nationally and statewide for achievements in programming and facility development.
- Attendance statistics attest to the popularity of the County's parks, facilities and programs among a more local audience.
- In order to continue to reap the benefits that parks and recreation have to offer, the County should continue to support both the maintenance of existing facilities and development of new facilities.



Community Guidance

- Through the survey and the first round of public engagement, one of the public engagement themes that most directly relates to this chapter is: “Respondents desire additional quality of life amenities including parks, public water access, expanded recreational facilities, trails for walking and bicycling, transit connections, and other enhancements to existing public facilities.”
- A substantial majority County residents view our parks and recreation offerings in a positive light. Just under 95% of survey respondents indicate that they are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with parks and recreation.
- From the 2017 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan Update: 99.6% of survey respondents agree, “Well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in the community.”



Goals, Strategies and Actions (GSAs)

- For this initial review, staff has not revised the Goals, Strategies and Actions that were adopted for the Toward 2035 Leading the Way Comprehensive Plan.
- Staff is currently beginning to examine potential revisions to the GSAs and has tentatively identified some actions to be potentially revised.
 - Updated references to the 2017 version of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan;
 - Updates to reflect the effect of budget constraints on certain programs/services;
 - Updates to include new parks or facilities (such as Brickyard Landing);
 - Possible addition of an action that touches upon collaboration with low income neighborhoods to facilitate improvements to neighborhood parks and recreation facilities.
- Members of the PCWG are welcome to provide initial suggestions and comments regarding the revision the of GSAs, and to provide suggestions for questions to include in the next round of public input.

Questions